~~and/or terminated~~ with one or more substituents selected from halo, cyano, nitro, lower alkyl, halo(loweralkyl), OR^6, $OC(O)R^7$, $C(O)R^8$, $C(O)OR^9$, $C(O)NR^{10}R^{11}$, $NR^{12}R^{13}$ and $SO_2NR^{14}R^{15}$)

R^3 represents H, lower alkyl, alkylHet or alkylaryl (which latter three groups are all optionally substituted ~~and/or terminated~~ with one or more substituents selected from halo, cyano, nitro, lower alkyl, halo(loweralkyl), OR^6, $OC(O)R^7$, $C(O)R^8$, $C(O)OR^9$, $C(O)NR^{10}R^{11}$, $NR^{12}R^{13}$ and $SO_2NR^{14}R^{15}$)

R^4 represents H, halo, cyano, nitro, ~~halo(loweralkyl),~~ OR^6, $C(O)R^8$, $C(O)OR^9$, $C(O)NR^{10}R^{11}$, $NR^{12}R^{13}$, $NR^{16}Y(O)R^{17}$, $N[Y(O)R^{17}]_2$, $S(O)R^{18}$, SO_2R^{19}, C(O)AZ, lower alkyl, lower alkenyl, lower alkynyl, Het, alkylHet, aryl, alkylaryl (which latter seven groups are all optionally substituted ~~and/or terminated~~ with one or more substituents selected from halo, cyano, nitro, lower alkyl, halo(loweralkyl), OR^6, $OC(O)R^7$, $C(O)R^8$, $C(O)OR^9$, $C(O)NR^{10}R^{11}$, $NR^{12}R^{13}$ and $SO_2NR^{14}R^{15}$)

Y represents C or S(O)

A represents lower alkylene

Z represents OR^6, halo, Het or aryl (which latter two groups are both optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from halo, cyano, nitro, lower alkyl, halo(loweralkyl), OR^6, $OC(O)R^7$, $C(O)R^8$, $C(O)OR^9$, $C(O)NR^{10}R^{11}$, $NR^{12}R^{13}$ and $SO_2NR^{14}R^{15}$)

R^{10} and R^{11} independently represent H or lower alkyl (which latter group is optionally substituted ~~and/or terminated~~ with one or more substituents selected from halo, cyano, nitro, lower alkyl, halo(loweralkyl), OR^6, $OC(O)R^7$, $C(O)R^8$, $C(O)OR^9$, $C(O)NR^{10a}R^{11a}$, $NR^{12}R^{13}$, $SO_2NR^{14}R^{15}$ and $NR^{20}S(O)_2R^{21}$ or Het or aryl optionally substituted with one or more of said latter thirteen groups) or one of R^{10} and R^{11} may be lower alkoxy, amino or Het, which latter two groups are both optionally substituted with lower alkyl

R^{10a} and R^{11a} independently represent R^{10} and R^{11} as defined above, except that they do not represent groups that include lower alkyl,

Het or aryl, when these three groups are substituted ~~and/or terminated~~ (as appropriate) by one or more substituents that include one or more $C(O)NR^{10a}R^{11a}$ and/or $NR^{12}R^{13}$ groups

R^{12} and R^{13} independently represent H or lower alkyl (which latter group is optionally substituted ~~and/or terminated~~ with one or more substituents selected from OR^6, $C(O)OR^9$, $C(O)NR^{22}R^{23}$ and $NR^{24}R^{25}$), one of R^{12} or R^{13} may be C(O)-lower alkyl or C(O)Het (in which Het is optionally substituted with lower alkyl), or R^{12} and R^{13} together represent C_{3-7} alkylene (which alkylene group is optionally unsaturated, optionally substituted by one or more lower alkyl groups and/or optionally interrupted by O or NR^{26})

R^{14} and R^{15} independently represent H or lower alkyl or R^{14} and R^{15}, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bound, form a heterocyclic ring

R^{16} and R^{17} independently represent H or lower alkyl (which latter group is optionally substituted ~~and/or terminated~~ with one or more substituents selected from OR^6, $C(O)OR^9$, $C(O)NR^{22}R^{23}$ and $NR^{24}R^{25}$) or one of R^{16} and R^{17} may be Het or aryl, which latter two groups are both optionally substituted with lower alkyl

R^5, R^6, R^7, R^8, R^9, R^{18}, R^{19}, R^{20}, R^{22}, R^{23}, R^{24} and R^{25} independently represent H or lower alkyl

R^{18} and R^{19} independently represent lower alkyl

R^{21} represents lower alkyl or aryl

R^{26} represents H, lower alkyl, aryl, $C(O)R^{27}$ or $S(O)_2R^{28}$

R^{27} represents H, lower alkyl or aryl

R^{28} represents lower alkyl or aryl

Het represents a four- to twelve-membered heterocyclic group, optionally substituted by one or more substituents selected from halo, cyano, nitro, oxo, lower alkyl (which alkyl group may itself be optionally substituted by halo), OR^6, $OC(O)R^7$, $C(O)R^8$, $C(O)OR^9$, $C(O)NR^{10a}R^{11a}$,

$NR^{12a}R^{13a}$ and $SO_2NR^{14}R^{15}$, which group contains one or more heteroatoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen, sulphur and mixtures thereof

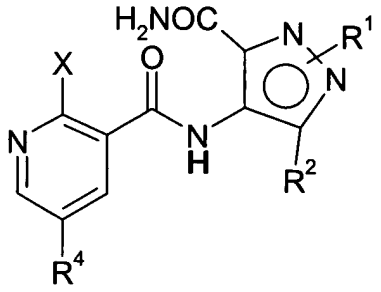
said process comprising reacting, in an inert, alcoholic, or mixed inert/alcohol solvent, a compound of formula (III), (IV) or (V) in the presence of $^{-}OR^3$ and a hydroxide trapping agent which is an ester of the formula

TOC(O)W

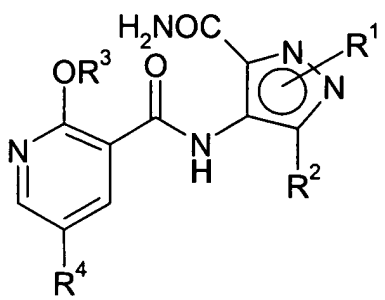
wherein OT is OR^3 or OT is ~~the residue of a bulky alcohol or~~ a non-nucleophilic alcohol or TOH is an alcohol which can be azeotropically removed during the reaction;

and C(O)W is the residue of a carboxylic acid;

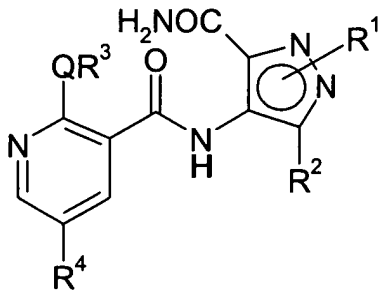
or, alternatively, in the case of compounds of formulae (IV) or (V) reacting, in an inert, alcoholic, or mixed inert/alcohol solvent and in the presence of an auxiliary base and a hydroxide trapping agent



(III)



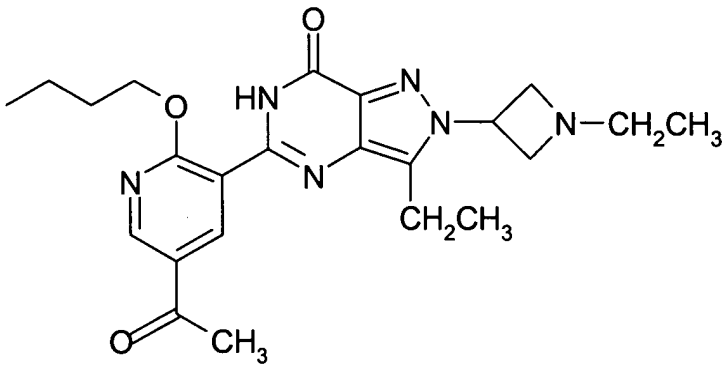
(IV)



(V)

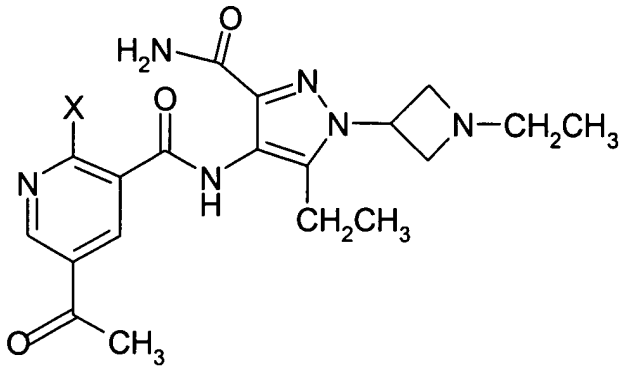
wherein X is a leaving group and Q and R^1 to R^4 are as defined above, provided that in said process, Q is not NR^5 when a compound of formula (III) or (IV) is used therein.

2. A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (IA):

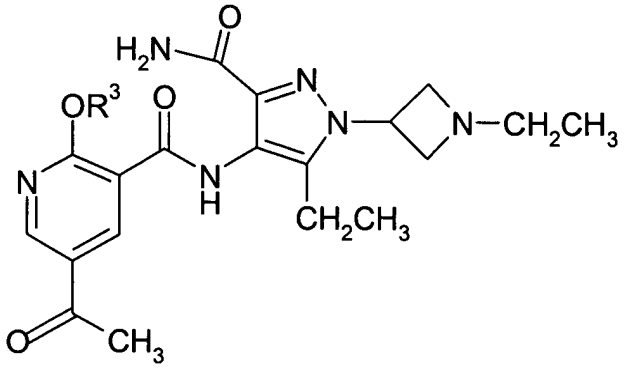


(IA)

said process comprising reacting a compound of formula (IIIA) or (IVA) respectively



(IIIA)



(IVA)

in the presence of $^{-}OR^3$ and a hydroxide trapping agent, wherein OR^3 is $CH_3(CH_2)_3O$-, or alternatively in the case of compounds of formula (IVA) reacting in the presence of a hydroxide trapping agent and an auxiliary base, wherein OR^3 in the case of formation of compound (IA) from (IVA) is $CH_3(CH_2)_3O$- and wherein X in formulae (IIIA) is a leaving group.

3. (previously added) A process according to claim 2 which comprises reacting a compound of formula (IIIA) wherein X is ethoxy in the presence of n-butyl acetate and potassium carbonate in n-butanol.